

MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2009

Commissioners Present: Joyce Abrams, Mary Alcock, Teresa Oyos, Tiffany Harrison, Mitz Lee, Susan Hawk, Gracia Molina de Pick, Bruce Abrams, Mark Dillon, Shonee Henry, Gary Lynn, Nicole Murray Ramirez, Carolina Alcoser Ramos

Excused: Roberto Shim

Absent: None

Staff: Danell Scarborough, Executive Director (ED); Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney

Chair Ramirez called the 212th meeting of the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission (HRC) to order at 5:30 p.m.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Roll Call: 13 Commissioners were present, 1 excused, and 0 absent.

Approval of Minutes – The October 21, 2009 minutes were approved.

II. PRESENTATION – SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO HATE CRIMES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY, BY SHERIFF GORE. Sheriff Gore presented on the work of the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department, the main law enforcement agency in the County. Crime is now at a 25 year low. Sheriff Gore provided information on his background, specifically his work for the FBI, during which he worked on the backlash experienced by the Middle Eastern population after September 11. Regarding dealing with hate crimes, the Department has been evolving, but they still have a ways to go regarding outreach. The Department takes hate crime allegations seriously. They are thoroughly investigated; however, they are difficult to prosecute. The Department has clear guidelines for hate crimes investigations due to the difficulties in proving hate crimes. Regarding Native American issues, his Department meets quarterly with Native American tribes to talk about issues and address concerns. Regarding immigration law enforcement, Sheriff Gore does not support the 287g program. The Department does not have the manpower and in his opinion it is a federal responsibility. Although they have a responsibility to cooperate with their federal partners and work collaboratively, his approach is to focus on responding to calls for public safety, rather than checking for illegal immigration. They do however address border crimes aggressively. They have a 16 person border crimes team which works collaboratively with other agencies to address border crimes. Sheriff Gore also spoke about the diversity in his Department. Of the

4000 employees, minority representation is good at the employee level although not as strong in the upper ranks. Diversity is one of the Department's core values. Sheriff Gore will provide diversity statistics to ED Scarborough.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – NONE

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Keith Turnham Veterans Award – Nominees for the 2009 Keith Turnham Veterans Award were presented. Nominees were (1) Mr. James M. Galliher, (2) Captain John H. Irons, (3) Congressman Bob Filner, and (4) Gus Chavez. Information was provided about each nominee. Chair Ramirez withdrew his nomination for Congressman Filner because there is time to nominate him in the future. Nominees were discussed.

Commissioner B. Abrams made a motion to vote for Capt. Irons for the Keith Turnham Veterans Award. Commissioner Ramos seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Regarding the persons or organizations to be honored at the December 16 holiday meeting, each Commissioner's nomination must be submitted to ED Scarborough by Monday, November 30, at 7:00 am.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Spanish on the City Website – Chair Ramirez stated that the City's website is currently available only in English. Given the diverse nature of our City and its large Hispanic and Asian-Pacific Islander population, the website should be available in Spanish and other languages. The City of Phoenix, for example, has its website available in Spanish. There is currently work being done to add a free translation link to make the website available in different languages; however there are changes that need to be made (Filipino to Tagalong), and coding the links need to be made a priority.

Commissioner Hawk made a motion to send a letter to the Mayor and City Council requesting that the City website be made available in Spanish (and other languages), and that this project be made a priority. Commissioner Abrams seconded. All were in approval.

HRC Officer Election Process – Chair Ramirez asked the Commissioners to notify Election Chair Hawk if they are interested in running or nominating someone for Chair or Vice Chair.

2010 MLK All People's Breakfast - Commissioner B. Abrams suggested organizing a table. The Breakfast will be on January 18. The Ashley Walker

Award will be presented at the Breakfast. ED Scarborough will look into where it should fit in the program.

Commissioner B. Abrams reported that the ICWJ Breakfast will be tomorrow, November 19, from 7:30 – 9:30 at the Hyatt Regency Mission Bay. Chair Ramirez will be recognized. There will be around 530 people at the Breakfast.

VI. CHAIR’S REPORT

Chair Ramirez reported that he spoke at City Council on behalf of himself regarding outsourcing because of advice given by legal. He asked for clarification from legal regarding the composition and powers of the Executive Committee. Deputy City Attorney Thacker stated that based on the bylaws, the Executive Committee is composed of the Chair, Vice Chair, and the Chairpersons of each committee. As a standing Committee, the Executive Committee is subject to the Brown Act. The Executive Committee did not have enough time to openly convene and take action prior to the City Council hearing. Deputy City Attorney Thacker will provide Brown Act training to the Commission at the January meeting.

Chair Ramirez reported that he visited a County jail. He believes Sheriff Gore is committed to increasing diversity; however he did not see any Latinos, Asians, etc. during his visit. He will be arranging a tour of juvenile hall. If you are interested, let him know. Also, he can arrange tours of women and men facilities as well. Commissioner Ramos suggested providing officer sensitivity training because HIV medications are not being provided.

Chair Ramirez reported that Congressman Filner and Councilmember Faulconer both sent letters to the Stamp Advisory Committee supporting the Harvey Milk Stamp. ED Scarborough will send copies of the letters Filner and Faulconer sent out.

ED Scarborough is following up with our request to be represented at CAHRO. Ashley Walker is there but she is no longer representing HRC.

Chair Ramirez received a letter from the Mabuhay Alliance about one of the Commissioners. Regarding the Alliance’s complaint, Chair Ramirez does not think that this particular Commissioner was acting on behalf of the Commission. Chair Ramirez recognizes that all Commissioners are individuals who are involved in many things in addition to the Commission. Chair Ramirez reminded the Commissioners to not wear their Commission “hat” or use their position when doing personal business.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

ED Scarborough reported that she made a visit to a tribe with Commissioners Hawk and B. Abrams. Henry Quero may be able to speak at the February meeting.

Next Tuesday the Mayor will release his plans for budget reductions. There will probably be cuts from the Commission's budget, but probably won't be anything major. It is important to turn in your monthly reports to document the work of the Commission during these tough budgetary times.

December 10 is International Human Rights Day. Commissioner de Pick will send more information to ED Scarborough to distribute to the Commissioners.

The retreat is scheduled for February 6, 2010.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Hate and Violence Prevention** – Commissioner B. Abrams reported that he has a speaker he would like to invite. He will check her availability and give the Commission further information.

United for a Hate Free San Diego – Commissioner Lynn reported that the planning meeting has been postponed for after the New Year.

- B. Immigration** – None.

- C. Educational Disparities** – Commissioner J. Abrams reported that there has been outcry due to SDSU's policy change. Commissioner de Pick commented that part of the financial crisis is due to an unoccupied dormitory. It is the President's (not Trustees') decision to decide whether to accept the policy change. The current policy allows for an upward adjustment to certain service area students' GPAs for community service work. This helps minorities and the poor. A change to this policy will deny some of these students admission, and they will have nowhere to go. Faculty, students and the community have been active in protesting the policy change. It is up to us to write a letter. Commissioners asked if a vote could be taken to write a letter. DCA Thacker responded that it would have to be properly agendaized for a future meeting, at which time it could be voted on.

- D. Criminal Justice System Disparities Committee** – ED Scarborough reported that there are bills being analyzed for success in the state regarding the criminal justice system and permanent imprisonment and will keep the Commission informed on updates.

- E. Legislative Update** – ED Scarborough reported the Board of Supervisors term limit initiative obtained the requisite number of signatures and will go to the ballot in 2010 if the signatures are legitimate.

IX. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner J. Abrams reported that SD City Schools are proposing horrible cuts, such as taking away GATE staff. Additionally, she, ED Scarborough, and Commissioner Harrison attended the Urban League Conference, which was a worthwhile event.

Commissioner de Pick reported that the Logan Heights Library will have its opening on December 11 at 11:00. She will send information to ED Scarborough to be distributed to the Commissioners.

- X. MEETING ADJOURNED:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:30.

Prepared by Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney

Approved by Danell Scarborough, Executive Director